



Personal Reflections

11/11/2016

Dear IMSA Community,

Last week, while standing outside my office, which is next to the Information Resource Center and overlooks the Senior U-bench, I realized how grateful I am to those who came before me, those who had the courage and vision to Act.Bold! Trustees, faculty, staff and students-thanks to them, IMSA has stayed opened and thrives as an educational center of excellence and innovation.

These IMSA Titans who came before us lived the motto that we've adopted this year for our IMSA30 celebration, "Think.Different. Act.Bold." Bold actions and different ways of thinking are in IMSA's DNA. We are, after all, IMSA Titans!

Today, I share below how we "acted boldly" during IMSA's remarkable second year of operation. As we celebrate our 30th year, I want to use my Personal Reflections to remind us of our history as we construct our future together.

One of our earliest memories as an IMSA community comes from our second year of operation in the fall of 1987. Founding President and President Emerita Dr. Stephanie Pace Marshall's testimony given to the General Assembly on October 30, 1987 captures it well:

We are seeking a supplemental appropriation in order to continue this school year. Without this appropriation we will be forced to close on January 31, 1988 just three months from now. If the Academy closes, it will likely never reopen and Illinois will have lost an invaluable educational, scientific, and economic resource.

If we want to attract the brightest and the best to Illinois education, research, technology, and business, we must cultivate the climate that nurtures and sustains the brightest and the best, or they will simply go someplace else.

In the next few days, you will be making a dramatic choice of whether this institution will survive, or not. Its fate is clearly in your hands. We will not have a second chance. Your decision will be your legislative legacy to the shareholders of this State.

As Statesmen and as architects of Illinois' future, I ask you to support the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy and permit it to continue and to excel.

Following Dr. Marshall's testimony, we launched an intensive campaign of letter writing and media coverage. On November 4, 1987, the Illinois General Assembly received our packets containing letters and copies of press releases and interviews.

Finally, one day before the vote, on November 5, IMSA held class under the dome of the State capitol. Over the course of three hours, 170 students led by 15 staff members "spoke Japanese and Russian, conducted physics and chemistry experiments, enacted scenes from a



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Shakespearean play, and logged-on to computers." Dr. Marshall is quoted saying that, "on November 6th, the vote was taken and we received our supplemental appropriation."

It's amazing to me that throughout our past 30 years, members of the General Assembly and Governors have acted boldly to ensure that IMSA remains open; thus, leaving a legacy of excellence and equity that promotes STEM teaching and learning, innovation and entrepreneurship for the entire state through IMSA, an educational center of excellence and innovation.

The topic of my next Personal Reflection will be "Think.Different" and at that time, I'll share another piece of IMSA's history that demonstrates different thinking.

Before I close this Reflection, I'd like to offer a challenge and an invitation. One that'll require us to Act.Bold. and to Think.Different.

As we look forward to the next 30 years as an IMSA community, I would like to challenge us to be bold in our aspirations for the next phase of our journey. Our world needs IMSA even more today than it did in 1986. Talented young people are needed in STEM fields; ethical, creative, scientific minds are necessary to significantly influence life on our planet; and high ambitions, bold actions and outstanding results will get us there! You and I understand why a globally strong STEM ecosystem is important and why the world needs to benefit from solutions to global challenges.

I'm inviting you to join me in a commitment to positively impact the lives of a billion people worldwide over the next 10 years. This will call upon IMSA, as a STEM community and a STEM culture, to apply its passion, knowledge, skills and experience in the fields of science, technology engineering and mathematics.

That's right! Imagine if the IMSA community committed itself to live into a "billionaire mindset" during IMSA's next decade? The world's greatest challenges and society's most serious needs are depending on us to develop and apply new achievements, ones that are social, economic, technological and scientific.

The host of National Geographic Channel's Brain Games, Jason Silva, launched a campaign to redefine "billionaire" as one who affects the lives of a billion people as a way to inspire individuals to address world problems in creative ways. This bold idea has a simple and powerful message, that today's new billionaire is someone who can achieve the impossible and positively impact a billion people.



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In the name of progress and on behalf of the human future, will you please consider joining me in becoming a billionaire?

Respectfully,

José M. Torres, Ph.D.